

form, but with some similarity of spirit, in the stories of Paradise and the Tower of Babel.

Our attention is now called to the work of those prophets who were the first to transmit to posterity actual notes of their sermons. These are the prophets of the Assyrian period—Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah. For the purpose of this brief sketch the books of Nah., Hab., and Zeph. may be neglected, since, in so far as they have any significant message, it is dependent on the great original preachers. The critical questions must be left untouched and results of recent research assumed. We seek to understand the message of these preachers, and how we can best state its relation to what has gone before. The careful composition of the sermons, brief and few as they are, shows that literary influences had been for some time at work. Their preservation proves that even in these troubled times there were students and disciples (Is. 8/16, 30/3). These four eighth-century prophets have their differences of circumstances, temperament, and style, but they join in the one protest against the social weakness and impure worship of their time, and, broadly speaking, present the same message and make the same demands. Amos, the stern messenger to Israel from outside; Hosea, emotional, tender, and showing intimacy and sympathy even in his denunciation; Isaiah, the man of the city, courtier, and statesman; Micah, the rude peasant of the Judæan lowlands—these men have much in common. They give us a striking proof that Yahweh, the living God, is one—one in His purpose through history, one in His demand for justice and call for service. They regarded themselves as conservatives, and in the best sense this was true. They might to a certain extent idealize the past, but two facts in this connexion we must recognize: (a) There is deterioration as well as progress in the life of a nation which, on the whole, is moving upward;; hence there is something to be learned from the simplicity and brotherliness of earlier days. (b) These prophets were not absolutely new in their life and original in their thought; they did rest upon a real historical basis and manifested a real continuity of life. Further, in any time of transition, in living creative periods,